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United Nations Population Award, 2015

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Secretary of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in resolution 36/201. The report covers the year 2015 and was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112.

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Report of the Secretary of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, 2015

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201, entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, or to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selects the laureate for the Award. The Committee is composed of representatives of 10 Member States of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years. The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund acts as Secretary of the Committee and submits to the General Assembly an annual report concerning the United Nations Population Award and its Trust Fund.

3. In its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the United Nations Population Award so that an individual and an institution could share the award.

4. In its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

5. The current elected members of the Committee are Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Grenada, Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar and the United Republic of Tanzania.

6. During its first organizational meeting, on 21 January 2015, the Committee elected Ambassador Edita Hrdá (Czech Republic) as the Chair for 2015.

II. United Nations Population Award, 2015

7. The Committee received 25 nominations from qualified nominators for the 2015 Award. Of these, 11 were for the individual category and 14 for the institutional category. On 7 April 2015, in accordance with its mandate, and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Thoraya Ahmed Obaid of Saudi Arabia in the individual category, and the African Population and Health Research Center of Kenya in the institutional category.

8. The Committee selected Ms. Obaid in recognition of her outstanding dedication and commitment to raising awareness of population issues, with a particular focus on the rights and empowerment of women, girls and young people, including successfully advocating for the expansion of the Millennium Development Goals to address maternal health and save the lives of women. The Committee cited her pioneering leadership in promoting issues related to sexual and reproductive health in a culturally sensitive manner and in conformity with internationally recognized human rights. In addition, the Committee considered Ms. Obaid's visionary leadership in including the voices of young people and institutionalizing their role in the work of the United Nations, as well as for strongly supporting the

establishment of an international network of youth advocates for sexual and reproductive health.

9. Ms. Obaid, as Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), recognized the complexity of cultural issues, including religion, in effecting change, especially in ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and introduced a programme on gender, culture and human rights to make culture a positive force for change. This is acknowledged as her unique contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. She also introduced a special programme that enabled young people to provide input into UNFPA programmes. By bringing young people from all regions to UNFPA headquarters to interact with global and regional programmes, the nine-month programme resulted in establishing a network of young people that linked the national, regional and international levels. Ms. Obaid is currently one of the first group of 30 women to be appointed as full members of the Majlis Ash-Shura (appointed Parliament) for a four-year term, from 2013 to 2016.

10. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selected the African Population and Health Research Center of Kenya for its 20 years of dedicated policy-relevant research on population, health and education to address Africa's most pressing health problems through South-South partnerships and policy engagement, and for strengthening the research capacity of African scholars and institutions in the areas of urbanization, population dynamics and reproductive health, ageing, health systems and education. The Committee cited its involvement in extensively documenting health inequities, including those related to reproductive health, which have driven public debate on sexual and reproductive health issues. In addition, the Committee considered its strong engagement with parliamentarians, which helps to place population and reproductive health issues on the political agenda, and for its vision and work to produce a critical mass of high-quality researchers and the next generation of population experts in Africa.

11. Founded in 1995, the Center is an African-based, African-run non-governmental international organization that conducts policy-relevant research on population in sub-Saharan Africa. Its purpose is to provide credible scientific evidence to inform policies and programmes in the areas of population, health and education, with a view to promoting the well-being of Africa's most disenfranchised people.

III. Financial matters

12. As at 31 December 2014, the Trust Fund of the United Nations Population Award had a total fund balance of $1,734,021.02. Interest income in 2014 was $10,372.34. Expenditure in 2015, including prizes awarded to the two laureates, totalled $96,950.37.